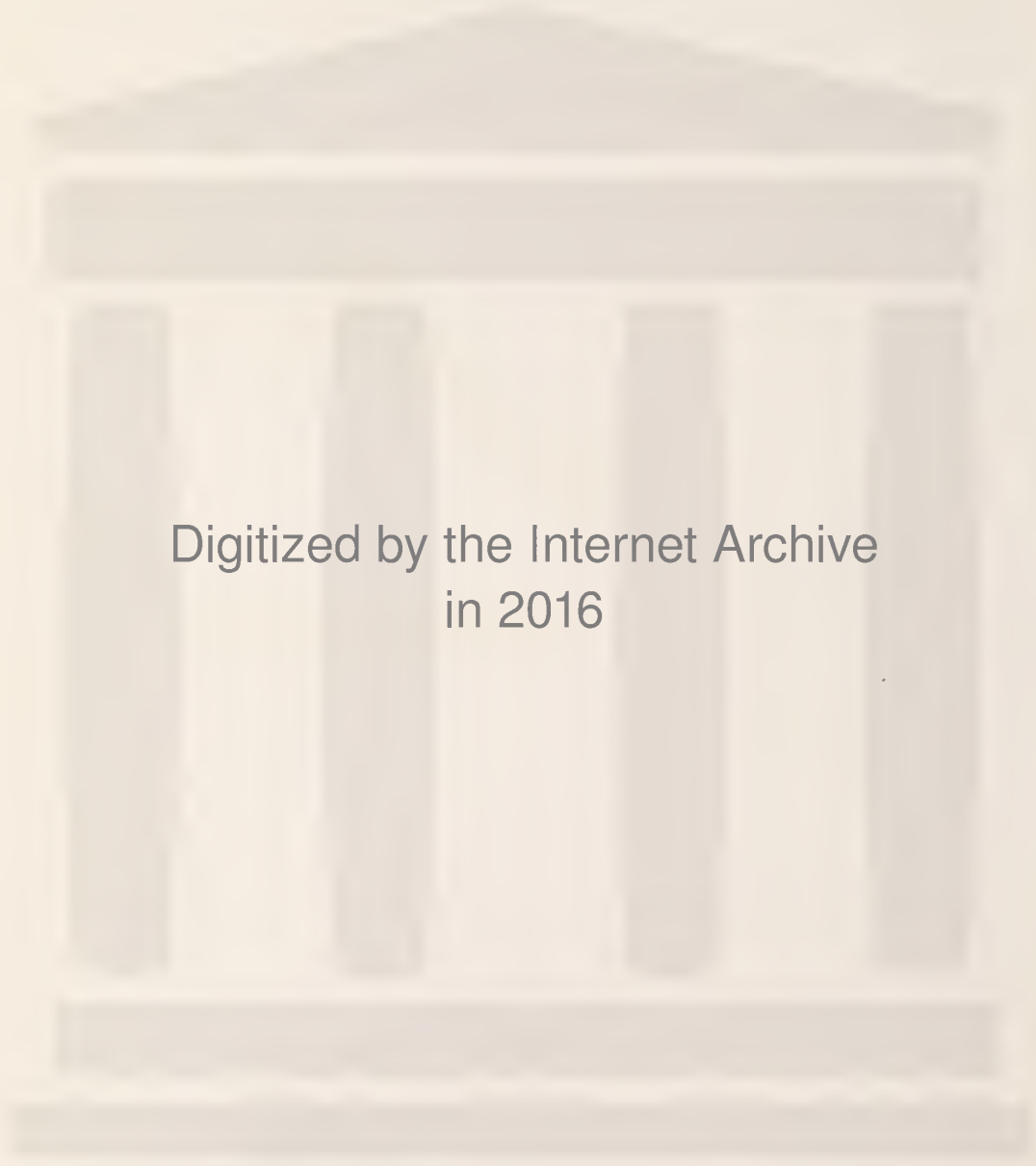

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calvert

i got a head full of ideas
that are drivin' me insane...

—r. zimmerman

Quotations from Chairman Eugene

CALVERT: *What books of poetry have you written and do you have any works-in-progress?*

McCARTHY: I have two books published — one was a private publication and the other was published by Doubleday, and includes those poems which are in the private publication and about 20 or 30 others. It's called *Other Things and the Aardvark*. I don't really have another one in progress although I have 25 or 30 poems lying around which may eventually be published.

CALVERT: *Do the majority of your poems come from familiar reality or from a more unique reality, like the Aardvark?*

McCARTHY: Generally, I use a lot of rural imagery which is a part of my background.

CALVERT: *When did you begin writing?*

McCARTHY: It's hard to say when I began to put the book together...about three years ago. I wrote poetry for many years without any real serious thought to getting it published.

CALVERT: *Did you start writing by choice or by necessity?*

McCARTHY: I don't know whether you can ever make that distinction. You have established poets who talk about the compulsion to write. I don't know quite what that means. I do think that in my case you do have a series of ideas or perceptions or even images that you think are somewhat unique and worthwhile, observations that no one else has made or no one else has made in quite the

same way, and you have the natural compulsion to want to say it to someone else.

CALVERT: *What poets have influenced your style and how would you characterize your style?*

McCARTHY: My writing comes out of a long exposure to poets. I'd hope that some of mine may be a little like Yeats, or Lowell perhaps, but I don't think it's that clear a connection. I didn't set out consciously to emulate anyone. There are four or five of my poems that I think are uniquely mine, but if it is to be marked by any distinction, it would be in the area of a commentary on our times and some of our behaviour. The one poem called "Three Bad Signs" would be most representative of that, I think. Another called "Recessional: Are You Running With Me, Jesus?" and "Lament of the Aging Politician." As to the others, you could probably say this is like someone else's poem or someone else's poem is like this. But there is that core, I think.

CALVERT: *Is your style very structured or very loose?*

McCARTHY: It's quite loose. This is not really a particular design. I don't feel that I have the right to say "I'll write any way I want to," which Shapiro does, for example. In my case I have some which you can measure, that use rhyme, but I try to let it come pretty much out of the thought. Sometimes it emerges in a formal structure and sometimes it doesn't. Generally the less serious ones like "The Gossip Columnist" will use rhyme. In "Three Bad Signs" there is a section called 'Green River Ordinance Enforced Here', where I do use rhyme with a particular purpose. The thought determines the structure and the form.

CALVERT: *Do most of your poems flow out of you? Are they the result of inspiration?*

McCARTHY: Some of them do come pretty solid. I have a long poem, "Aries", which is on the war, and you could say it came rather quickly, but when you look back on it you find you put into it things you've been thinking about out of the context of poetry, and when you begin to put it together it comes rather quickly. I've had others that have been around for three or four years sometimes that never quite jell, others that I'll pick up after eight or nine months. Those last kind seem to usually come out stilted or less finished than ones which flow out. Yeah, I think that's right, although sometimes it's a more difficult idea and you're not sure yourself of it, or you're sure in your mind but it's difficult to put it into words.

CALVERT: *Do you attempt to divorce yourself from the political world when you write, or if it does mix into your poetry, how does it influence you?*

McCARTHY: Well, in some cases I think you do write poetry out of your experience. One or two that I've written on Vietnam are more directly concerned with my being in politics, but most of the others are from some other province or are only incidentally related to the political world.

CALVERT: *Whom do you approach for criticism of your poetry?*

McCARTHY: There are one or two people I have read my poems. They're friends whose judgement and response I trust. I think you have to be careful when you're writing, as I was telling some students, not to try to compare your poetry to Yeats or Goethe or one of the really established poets, because the standard may be too severe. I think you have to be careful not to submit your work for criticism or rewrite to people who have an established position of their own. It's always struck me as a paradox that whenever you write something you thought was very individual it had to be at the same time universal in order to communicate. I think someone like Ezra Pound, for example, could write poetry which he knew would not be understood or enjoyed by very many people yet you wouldn't have to say that everybody must understand what you're saying if you're satisfied that what you're saying is the truth. You might even write it for yourself, I suppose. You would probably hope there would be at least one other person around, either in his own time or someone who would read his poetry and say that's the truth or that's right or I'm glad he wrote that.

CALVERT: *Would you characterize yourself as a poet who is also a politician or as a politician who is also a poet?*

McCARTHY: Well, those who aspire to the presidency would say I was a poet, so I guess I'll leave the politics to them.

lotus steele

The wall

It wasn't chain link,
Or even brick.
It was made of flesh.
And when I touched it
It would hurt

So we decided that we would walk along it for awhile
And maybe find something to eat,
Or a way through it,
And you turned to me and asked
If I knew what I was doing.
When I awoke, I was biting my arm.

—george kressley

Darkroom

Your face rises before me
from a darkroom tray,
takes shape and sharpens features
but turns dark and vanishes
before I have time to
fix it
or
remains so light
that no matter how long I hold it
in that chemical sac
it is never fully formed.

Sometimes I think that even if
I held your face still for once
I would find it the way I snapped it
out of focus.

—rosi beales

Ride of the Valkyries

The Valkyries, according to Norse legend, ride down from the gods' mountain, Valhala, to gather up those slain in battle, and take them back to be with the gods. It is interesting to note that Norse myth holds that Valhalla will ultimately be destroyed by giants.

I

I am Siegfried,
ancient warrior slain in ancient times.
I saw battles enough in as many years
as would loosen the skin from your bones,
as it warped the skin from mine
into dry folds.

The tales I could tell:
armies pulsing on the field
in the throes of war and the sun
hot, only your own blood hotter,
spilling to the ground.

II

We died to the last man.
When I was cut down our tents
were still in enemy hands.

We all lay twisted on the twisted ground,
our own limbs dim before our dimming eyes.
The moon rose red
tainting the last fog
breath of a thousand dying men.
And then,
as our fathers had told us,
and theirs before them:
the fog parted and stood guard
on Valhala,
lit red in the moon's glow
Valhalla, mountain of gods.
There was a crack like thunder
bringing not rain but
like rain they flowed down the mountainside
pouring white on white: wondrous women
on shining steeds they came riding
into the midst of us singing,
their song filled the sky.

Each extended a hand to each downed man.
It was over quickly
like summer rain
they were gone
up the mountainside:
to live in raiments of the brave:
helmet, bones, shield, flesh,
breastpiece and new blood.
All were gathered to the feasting tables.
Only I was left behind,
overlooked, in a rocky ravine.

IIII

I am Siegfried,
ancient warrior with skin of rock,
blistered bones on blistered ground
scattered and waiting for battle.

—elizabeth ayres

Out of the nest

Out over tumbling
    down over
down to the ground
under the tree it goes
    tumbling baby
baby squirrel.
Mother threw it out —
she thinks it's a bird
or a flying squirrel
maybe, it's flying.

I'm no mother —
a stupid mother maybe
but I threw you out
baby, maybe I flew
out too. Out over
    tumbling down
over down to
where I haven't yet hit,
    flying,
we can't fly —
I'm falling over
and over and over you
and over you.

—bruce szmajda

harold lalos

East brown cow

1
No moon tonight
This island lies like a planet
unwound, unearthed
there is one boulder-heart
still beating

It is the right time:
A plank returns to dry land
as planks do: green
fur of diatoms, algae,
trailing cow-tails:
the pyramid of light-feeders
that floated so easily
for so long
floats easily into the next world.

2
A cow sleepily dances
her way
to a corner of her world.
The bell around her neck bangs
here I am
here I am
here a white fence
rises like the moon.
But it is morning,
there is gravity
sucking
so she goes
here I am
no here I am no

—nancy marks

Lisa

Oh do you know
That when you set

That knife to your wrist
In two strokes

Of childish wonder
To see if it hurt

Those two strokes
Did seal forever

Your gracious certainty
In a vessel — so fragile

I dare not pick it up
Lest it break

And catch me
Trying to hold you there.

But I am caught
So quick

In two strokes
Of childish wonder

To your bone — my bone
To see if it hurts.

—bruce szmajda

birthmark

wayloon chuang

The Fox of San Luis Muerta

There are some people who cannot or will not understand, some for whom things have to be spelled out, set down in hard empirical print, who have to be told why, how, and where it's at. For them, this:

> "The mass of men serve the state thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies. They are the standing army, and the militia, jailors, constables, possee comitatus, etc. In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgement or of the moral sense; but they put themselves on a level with wood and earth and stones; and wooden men can perhaps be manufactured that will serve the purpose well. Such command no more respect than men of straw or a lump of dirt. They have the same sort of worth only as horses and dogs. Yet such as these even are esteemed good citizens. Others — as most legislators, politicians, lawyers, ministers, and office-holders — serve the state chiefly with their heads; and, as they rarely make any moral distinctions, they are as likely to serve the Devil, without intending it, as God. A very few, as heroes, patriots, martyrs, reformers in the great sense, and men, serve the state with their consciences also, and so necessarily resist it for the most part; and they are commonly treated as enemies by it."
>
> —henry david thoreau,
> *Civil Disobedience*

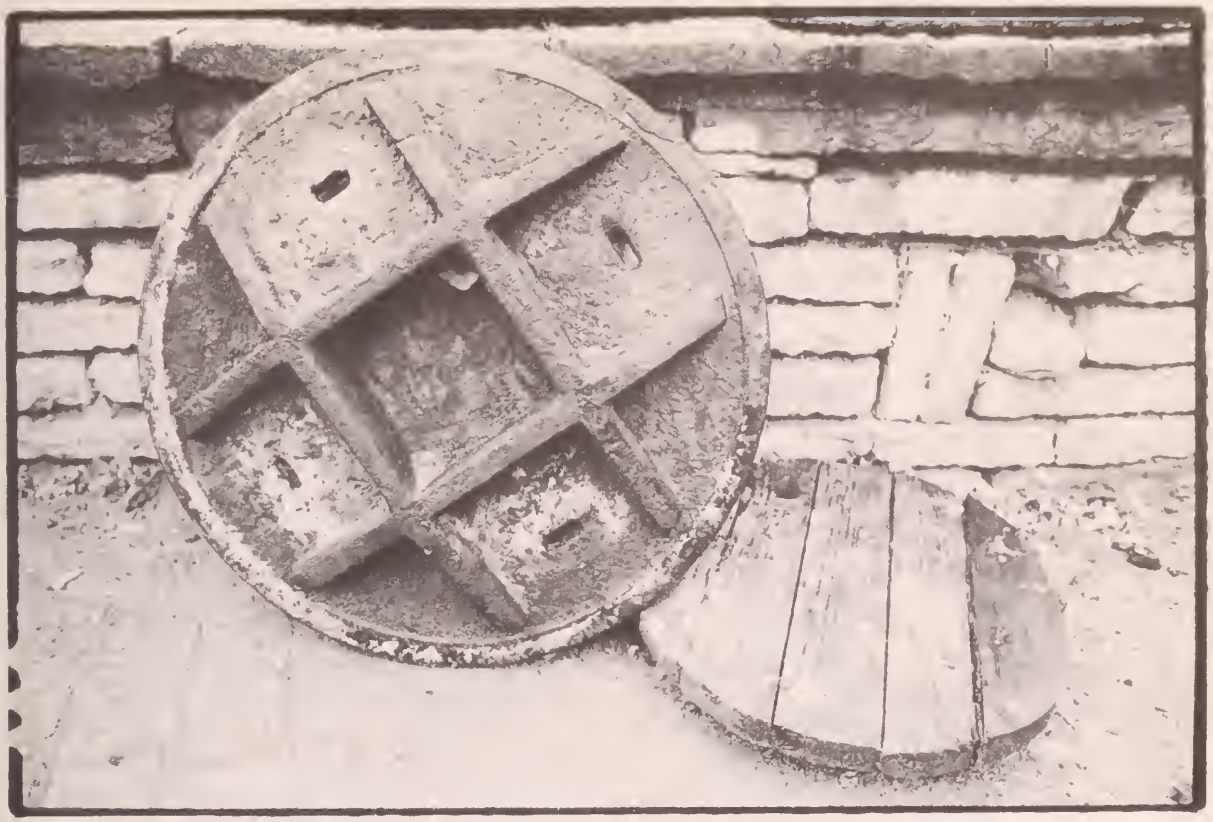
That is the heart of the matter. Now begin in the middle and later learn the beginning. The end will take care of itself.

Because it was the world it was, the world they had allowed it to become, because the sky was always more or less gray, the water always brackish and impure, because of this, and more, it was not surprising that the people of San Luis Muerta did not know that a war was in progress. You can't really blame them — the people of San Luis Muerta. They were for the most part, born after the initial hostilities and before any official declaration of war. They were solid, middle-class suburbanites trying to keep up with inflation, ahead of the Joneses, abreast of taxes, and behind their candidate and, with their cumulative nose to the grindstone, they really could not be blamed for ignoring their besieged environment.

San Luis Muerta was an incorporated community of perhaps 150,000 people sprawled between the Hills of Beverly on one side and the West Bay area next to the sea on the other. Together, these three communities comprised the southern quarter of Greater Los Angeles and that is sufficient reason for many of you not to read any further. But, if you've a mind to, read on because all of us may, one day, profit from the story of the Fox of San Luis Muerta.

Leopold Mudhous squatted near the rim of Becker Canyon gazing down on the industrial plain of West Bay with the familiar silver expanse of the Pacific Ocean beyond. It was now in the half-light of sunset and many of the industrial beacons that illuminate the graveyard shift were spotting the darkening valley like the many campfires of nightly Agamemnon.

Leopold began to move, carefully picking his way down the last shadowed slope to the valley floor. Slung over his left shoulder was a mammoth disk of plywood that might have been mistaken for the great shield of Hercules, and the yellow of his civil defense helmet added to the illusion as it glistened



josh wilkenfeld

gold in the dying light. Around his waist he wore a belt resplendent with the jangling tools of a lineman: rope, pulleys, clampons, and wire cutters. Jangle, jangle, jangle he walked until he had crossed the valley floor to the first wirey perimeter of the C.A. Davery Steelworks, with only an occasional lizard stopping to mark his sullen passage.

It was an easy matter to snip an opening in the galvanized webbing, and, quickly done, he was through, running from shadow to shadow, his destination the first of twelve columnar leviathans which even now poured tons of billowing black poison into the already sulphurous atmosphere.

He reached his quarry with a thump, thump, thumping in his chest that was familiar, though he imagined he would never be used to the agony; never used to the tension of these raids. He was not by nature a hunter and often he knew the sinking sick stomach of inexperience.

Setting his equipment down he circled the smokestack, which was about forty feet in diameter at its base, being careful, always, to remain in the shadows of nearby torches which flickered with the red combustion of arsenic and natural gas. He found the ladder, its retractable base locked in position a good nine feet above his head, and threw a grappling hook over the bottom rung. Then he stooped to attach the other end of the line to the plywood disk before he began the assault. When he had mounted the ladder, he passed the end of the line through a pulley and continued the ascent, feeding out rope as he climbed. Near the top of the ladder he paused for a moment to sink his face into a gas mask which stared, now, with glassy, expressionless eyes out over the dead landscape nearly one hundred feet below. He continued up. The rim of the smokestack was a scant six feet in circumference, and it was an easy matter to whip the end of his line around the warm brick and secure himself to the ladder top. He fastened his pulley to the ladder and began to haul up the plywood circle.

Smoke continued to rise above his head, and the air was thick with sulphur, some of which penetrated his gas mask and made his eyes water.

When the plywood cap was clamped tightly in place over the four-foot mouth of stack number five and before alarms sounded in the main plant nearly three miles away, Leopold Mudhous was clear of the valley driving home

to San Luis Muerta. He heard the distant wail of sirens rising in pain and protest, indignant over the sneak attack, a factory blinded and choking in its own waste. A smile flickered across his lips but did not remain long.

The Los Angeles District Attorney, every bit over six feet, an ex-DI in the Marines, often silent, a soft purring man when things went legalwise, sat behind his desk on the 18th floor of the Federal building and stared corrosively at his assembled crew of plain-clothes detectives, assistant district attorneys, constables on patrol, and finks.

"Gentlemen," he began, "I have in my left hand your report on the recent rash of industrial sabotage that has plagued our community. This report tells me what, when, how, and possibly, why, but it does not tell me who. In my right hand, I hold today's edition of the L.A. Sun. It tells me what, when, how, perhaps why, and it also does not tell me who. Could it be that all of you are working for the L.A. Sun, because you're certainly not working for me. Gentlemen, I need a who," he said with genuine softness. "I do not have a who. It is your job to get me a who."

The soft purring ended as abruptly as it had begun. It had been a long speech, longer than any of them: the dects, the ass DA's, or the cops had ever heard him give. Even the finks, who were hardly ever there, could tell it was a long speech, and it made everyone very self-conscious so that after a moment, they all hurried out to find a who, all the Dects, The Assdas, the cops and the finks.

The middle you know. Now, here is the beginning.

Alice Mudhous stared passively at the wall over her husband's head.

"What do you mean," she fairly shouted, "What could you possibly be angry about? I mean, so what! Some crummy river you can't possibly catch any fish in anyway, and you're mad because it's dirty."

"That is the point, Alice," Leopold came down hard on his wife. She didn't mean to be stupid. She was like all the rest of the people in San Luis Muerta, insensible to the struggle, the need for action, the need to survive. Alice had been born and bred in the city, of smoke and grit, on the noise and the mechanical whirr whirr of expedience. He imagined she would die of reverse claustrophobia or something if ever once she ventured out beyond where the forests began.

"I can't catch any fish in the Fox River," he continued, "because they're all dead. Those factories killed them with their sludge and poison dust that takes the air out of the water and the joy out of life."

The incomprehensibility of this was too much for Alice. She exploded, bawling, "Why would you want to catch those stupid fish anyway? I can buy the best frozen cod in the world at the Quicky Mac Market-Plex."

The six-syllable idiom nearly gagged Leopold so that he had to burp remembering Alice's last fresh-dried, frozen Cod dinner.

"I don't care Alice, sometimes a man likes to do for himself. The fish aren't important, it is the loss of something beautiful that makes me angry. Fox River was a place a man could go to escape, to get away from the city and relax and if I caught an occasional fish why then, it was so much bonus. But now, God, you ought to see Fox River. It's been reduced to a sewer, and the smell is so bad I need my gas mask to even get near it."

Some of his anger was abated now, and he thought maybe, just maybe, I can reason this out for her. "You see, dear," he began with genuine tenderness, "there was some concern over the pollution originally, and some people did some things about it. They elected officials who passed laws against polluting industry, they allocated funds for anti-pollution campaigns and clean-up programs, but as the months passed and people forgot, officials lost interest or they lost their jobs, funds were misused, laws disobeyed, and the whole damn thing dried up just the way Fox River is going to dry up. It's time somebody did something. We...I have got to take action now to fight this."

"But," she made a quick recovery, "do you have to break laws? I mean, running around all night in that silly get-up...what do you call it, civil disobedience, sabotage! You're gonna get caught, you know that, and then, what will the neighbors say? 'Look, there goes Alice Mudhous, poor girl. She's married to that loony bird who calls himself the Fox!!' I think I'll change my name," she concluded triumphantly.

"I wish you could understand, Alice, I really do, but I have to go now. It's already after 7:00, and I'll be late."

He started out the door, but she caught him with a final harsh, not very clever retort, "You're a fool, Leopold, to make such a big deal out of that crummy river. You always overstate, Leopold, and it's gonna get you in trouble." He closed the door and nodded to himself, she's right, she's always right. I overstate, I always overstate, and he went off in the dark to overstate once more.

From his watching place on top of the Central Office Building Leopold could peer down on the entire five city blocks of the General Motors manufacturing complex. He had been sitting, peering for nearly six hours. It was now approaching the noon hour and Leopold nervously fingered the small but powerful remote control device resting in his jacket pocket. Each component of the little mechanism had been struck and soldered into place with meticulous, often painful care. Ruefully, Leopold eyed the mass of white bandages that protruded from his right sleeve, the pain, he considered, was nearly gone. He forced his attention back to the matter at hand, five minutes to twelve.

At 8:00 that morning Leopold had boldly merged with a sea of automotive workers surging its way to the time clocks. Yelling boisterously, shouting defamations on the heads of 'fat-assed executives' who didn't have to be at work, if you could call an eight hour coffee break work, until 9, Leopold had grabbed a card and punched in two minutes late. He hoped Jose Zimblatt would not mind or perhaps notice that his card had been used. Once inside the main work shed Leopold had set about locating the huge vat of rust-red undercoat into which whole car bodies were dipped to protect them from the cancer of rust. He found the vat soon enough, something like that would be hard to hide even if someone wanted to hide it, and of course no one did. Leopold secured a push cart laden with various articles of dubious utility and began to wind his way toward the vat. A quick survey assured Leopold that he had not been observed. Thirty seconds later a tiny explosive was clipped securely to the undercarriage of the tank. By 8:30 Leopold was in and out of the work shed and had found his way to the top of the office building.

He was jerked from his reverie by the strident blast of a lunch whistle and as men began to swarm out of the shop across the street Leopold glanced at his watch and began to count backward from fifty...49...48...47. He pulled the remote control from his pocket, 37...36...35. He wasn't nervous now, but surprisingly, he noted he was not breathing either, 4...3...2...1...he pushed the button.

Instantly a dull rumble sounded indistinctly from the general direction of the work shed, no breaking glass or ripping metal, no flash of erupting flame, just a dull, ominous groan as of some distant sea, and then it came, a ripple at first, then a tidal wave of rust-red goo pouring into the street. Leopold watched fascinated at the sudden rush of men, startled to be engulfed by the rising torrent of scarlet foam. One man scrambling frantically against the sticky crest which bore him all the way across the street finally came to rest against the opposite curb and just sat there bawling his loud frustration, as the incredible mess streamed over his legs and down the street.

For the 3000 odd victims in the street, shock at encountering a wall of red paint pouring down upon them may have been the only harm done them, for even two million gallons of paint, suddenly unconfined, quickly seeks a harmless, though thoroughly unpleasant level.

As the red stain spread down the street, some of the victims recovered sufficiently to regain their footing, only to perceive a number of their not-so-hapless comrades, those who had by fortune or nimbleness exceeding that of their fellows escaped the deluge, standing at the side of the disaster, themselves victims of uncontrolled laughter.

One man trying to regain his footing on the slippery pavement grabbed the arm of a bystander and losing his balance pulled the unwilling spectator down to his just reward. Someone threw a handful of the slime, which missed its target and landed squarely in the face of an otherwise unblemished foreman. It required a mere five seconds for the reddest, all-out, no-quarter-given-or-asked, knock-down-drag-out, paint-slingingest free-for-all you ever saw in your whole life to begin.

Tempers flared and as quickly subsided midst roars of belly-good laughter as 3000 men, every manjack of them, roared and reveled up to his tin can in the spreading shadow of an amazing, sticky, red-lead sea.

Catching the Fox was not going to be an

easy task, as the officials of the District Attorney's office soon found out. For one thing, Leopold proved impossible to anticipate. There must have been 500 likely targets for his selection within a 50 mile radius of downtown Los Angeles, which is interesting if you consider that it was also the task of the DA's office to apprehend and convict wanton polluters. But other tasks sometimes fall by the wayside which is just what happened when the DA got landed on by both feet of the official hierarchy, and that was it. The word was out, either get the Fox or we'll find someone who can.

You see, the Fox had become something of a notoreity, a celebrity, if you will, among the masses who will always need bread and circuses, their heroes, and villians. He was hailed triumphantly throughout the community as the defender of the little man, Zorro, Robin Hood, Roman Gabriel (the Quarterback's quarterback), Jomo Kenyatta, T.E. Lawrence, and Doctor Dooley. The Fox became a symbol of all that was just and moral in the common sense. Even the local media, eager for a crusade, any crusade, took up the banner and hoopla and overnight, the environment became the great issue and he Fox, sole central figure in an elaborate comic opera that left everyone very amused. Well almost everyone.

There is another segment of society which took quite a different view of the Fox and his midnight activites. They were the top of the social heap, the officialdom, the hierarchy, the politicians, the industrialists and sons of industrialists. For them, the Fox was a nightmare; he was Che Guevara, Walter Reuther, Ralph Nader, Mick Jagger, and Attila the Hun. And they were out to get the Fox.

There were rumors that local industry had contracted with certain eastern-based offshoots of notable Mediterranean families to rub out the Fox and the Devil take the law, but that may only have been a rumor. Anyway, there wasn't an unemployed private detective in all of Southern California and even the Military was nervously eyeing its defense of nerve gas stockpiles.

And so, it went, the low and the high of it. The best and the worst of both camps opinionated and pinioned. The end extremes of society with but one common interest: a man, villianous or vilified. Society, coming apart at the center and so it must be, always; the only two opinions that ever really mean anything, hope from the hopeless and hate from the hateful.

Leopold began to expand his advance on society. He moved from private industry to public works, from corporate franchises to Government agencies. He broadened the frequency of his attacks. They were bi-weekly now and, as he struck with increasing impunity, the authorities began to fear that sympathizers would be lured from their respective place on the sidelines to join him in the field. In fact, there were some, for the most part old-line, dyed-in-the-wool police sergeant types, who insisted that the Fox was not simply one slightly deranged malcontent but, in fact, a band of highly organized possibly foreign-based saboteurs. Some began to yell "commie" and "better dead than Red." They hassled the hippy colonies above Beverly Hills and hauled in truck loads of migrant workers, vagrants, and assorted misplaced persons.

Nearly everyone became suspect, everyone, that is, except Leopold Mudhous who, like the great majority of respectful law-abiding citizenry remained, silent, invisible, and ignored.

While teams fumigated the steelworks at C.A. Davery, the Fox struck a sewage disposal plant at Edgewater in Westbay. They were busy draining an overnight accumulation of backed-up sewage when Caligasco Gas and Electric of Southern California got 500 pounds of resinous sequoia sap in their main turbine. Fuzz, buzz, fitzz went the generators, and the brown-out spread. The Fox had tapped the first domino in a long string of astonishingly delicate installations, fuzz, fitzz, fuzz, and L.A. was plunged into abyssmal black.

"Gentlemen," said the DA, his face pale and drawn in the flickering candlelight, "We have reached a darkened hour." Someone fumbled in the darkness, a snigger, "Cough... cough."

"For god sake, someone open a window before we all suffocate."

"Can't, they don't open — air conditioning, you know."

"Gas?"

"No, electric."

"Damn."

The DA continued, "This whole affair has gotten completely out of hand. The Governor has sent a runner to inform me that he is declaring L.A. a disaster area. It may be days until complete service is restored. Meanwhile, hospitals continue on emergency generators. However, all communications are down across the state, and industry has ground to a standstill. I'm declaring martial law as soon as the radio stations are back on the air." A murmur of approval filtered through the office.

"I want the Fox. Don't come back until you've got him," said the DA quietly, very precisely, extremely dangerously.

They used dogs. They used laboratories. They used search and seizure. They used forceable entry. They used warrants. They used court orders. They used bribes. They used blackmail, they used torment, and they used torture. They used betterment incentive. They used team competition. They used the F.B.I., the C.I.A., and they used the R.C.M.P. They used fingerprints. They used karate. They used cunning and guile. They used treachery. They used Pascuale Himmelfarb, but he didn't help much. They used applied physics. They used techniques of advanced criminology.

And, what they hell, they caught him, which shouldn't surprise you much because he was only Leopold Mudhous, and that wasn't much to start with — just a man with a passion to fish.

"Give it up, Fox," said the DA.

"Get stuffed," the Fox replied.

"Listen, Leopold," said the DA, "We've got you now and with enough evidence to hang you if they still hanged people in California. So, why don't you admit everything, and it might go easier with you."

"Up yours," said the Fox.

"You're a public enemy, Mudhous, or were, and now, you've been had, and I'm going to put your lights out."

"Scare somebody your own size, boogy man."

"I've tried to be easy on you, Leopold, even generous considering, but unless you tell it straight, I'm gonna farm you out to the shrinks."

"I'm saner than you, pig."

"The rest of your life in a loony bin."

"Get off. You're afraid of a trial. Name one person who'd convict me."

"A pretty girl named Alice. How do you think we got you?"

"Bull," said the Fox.

"True, Leopold. You unnerved her. She's like your one-man bandwagon. 'Proud to do my duty,' she said."

"You're a Goddamn liar."

"Give it up, Fox."

"Get stuffed."

So, they sent him away to Tonkawood Rehabilitation Center where it was very bad, like *1984* and what they did to Winston Smith and back home in San Luis Muerta, everybody forgot, and they got the sap out of the turbine and the sewage back into Fox River where everyone knew it belonged anyway, and plant No. 5 reopened, but you could hardly notice the sky got blacker.

And then one night, Leopold Mudhous appeared on local T.V. looking bright-eyed and bushy-tailed and not the least bit brainwashed, while, he told all the prime time listeners how he was very sorry for raising such a ruckus and how he had been wrong because he always overstated things and that he hadn't been feeling well, but now he was much better, and he hoped everybody would forgive him because he really wanted to work with the community after all. Hip-ho and away we go.

Everybody listening said to himself, Oh, well, you see, he was just a nut after all, and you can't fight city hall. Besides, what's the point, things aren't that bad when you get right down to it, we're lucky we didn't get involved. So, Leopold Mudhous was defeated which was a loss, but every battle has its casualties, men lose when they shouldn't, but they have to because that is the way the system is run, which is what Thoreau said earlier, but what the hell, you can't make an omlette without breaking a few eggs, and there is no use in crying over spilled milk because that's the way it happens, and if you make a little change along the way, why then it was worth it. Or, to make my point:

"Look," said the DA, "I don't give a damn if it's not a city ordinance. No member of my staff is going to get away with it." And the Dects and the cops and the Assdas and the finks all quit spitting on the sidewalk.

—harlan weikle

dennis hagerty

dennis

stanford barouh

patti dixon

warren
hill

marsha solomon

To die

Just release me,
and watch
my body deflate,
spinning.

Flapping,
till I shimmy,
and exhale
the last breath,

Flapping,
till I fall
rubber small
at your feet.

—reginald lyles

I touch
his cold, hard
belt buckle
and rough ridges
of corduroy sleeves.
Someone soft
moves underneath.

I wait.
  Nearby a hummingbird
  beats its wings.
His lips come.

A rose plum.
Cool, tight skin
bursting warm
juice sweet
into my mouth
slow.

—valerie goldberg

Reply from your television repairman

Blinded by the naked eye you seek
understanding, Madam. Your letter complains
that I should explain (in layman's terms)
what way your television dims and darks;
how it flickers sightless; why it dies.
Very well, be patient Madam, I will try.

Envision a wave, cresting full
with a moon and tide; the look
of energy compiled until it breaks
the ride into foam and spews outside.

A wave works like a resistor, Madam.

Now take a sky, pack it full
with storm-wild clouds charging an air
so intense that one ion more splits
all earth from air: Make lightning flare.

The sky is something of a capacitor, Madam.

Find last a sun. Make it red-old
with summer; let it dip past a mountain
until it flicks off towards dark, drops
through two hemispheres, then quits, abrupt.

That sunset is a cathode tube, cooling, Madam.

And the dark in your set when the big screen
slips off, the lack of that electron light,
That Madam, (in layman's terms) we call night.

—robert wickless

Tarp

Splish. bus slipping to suburbia.
not like soap bar that the verb would
have you believe.

Rain. stinking damp. mache wet
faces. I never minded much that
the Nats would lose the opener.

Glove, one cracking leather, hitched
to kid. he plants himself beside me, too careful.

you get any foul balls

last year my dad caught one.
got it autographed by mike.

advertisement silence until
my stop comes. my skin
in an overcoat dryness.
outside of bus i shower.

—elijuh mirochnik

david sperling

Ratsong

A rat, a rat!
As big as a hat!
As big as a bat,
As big as a cat!
As big as a dog,
As big as a log!
As big as a tree,
As big as you and me!
As big as this room,
As big *as the moon.*

How'd he get so big?
By eating a twig?
By eating the pig,
Or taking a swig?
By eating the phone,
Or even *eating this poem?!?*

All Sing:

Oh, he's eating his school,
He's eating your pool.
He's eating your gun,
He's eating the Sun.
He's eating the teacher,
He's eating the preacher.
He's eating your mother,
Your sister and brother!
Oh, He's Eating So Fine,
eating so fine
He's Eating Your Mind.
eating your mind.

—george kressley

josh wilkenfeld

skip barnhart

Poison

You talk slow to me
drawing out your words
like thick red spittle
that I might understand
the intensity of your desire
eats at my eyes
like salt.

I am sick like in the morning
when I am sick from hunger
and in finding myself empty again.
So I take this from you —
trusting,
I lap at it like a dog
and go away to lie down.

If this is poison, I will die
from it
but I will see you dead first.
Your thin body will leave itself
for me,
lying at my door
like a dog come home.

—michael bright

Way down under

Way down under in the land of Was
People don't live in houses because
All of the people are covered with fuzz
So when it rains
They only get soggy

The only trouble is that when it's night
All of the candles are hard to light
And because the Fuzz are not too bright
They set each other on
Fire!

So every night after it rains
All you hear are screams of pain
If only the Fuzz would use their brains
They'd see the light
Is from their brothers
Burning

—paul burch

stanford barouh

Grandmother and Grandson

My grandmother who wore stiff white collars
In her youth and showed me her darkened photographs
And told me how she and Lila went by train
In the summer heat that day in long dresses to meet
Their beaus and Lila stuck herself with a gold pin
And got blood over the starched collar
And now the brooch was tarnished
And poor Lila gone,
Turned toward her mirror to fix sixty years
Of hair into place in a conservative bun
And sighed, to my great horror,
What a shame we couldn't all wear potato sacks
With all this dressing and undressing,
For she read Wordsworth and believed the world
Too much with us and I followed her downstairs
In fascination to see the ladies come in fox fur
And have tea in the great rose colored parlor.

—w.a. gardiner

The pole carriers
(hydrocephalus—children's ward)*

What is that tree shape, you ask,
crossing its branches
around your skull?

The hypodermic
that pumps you with
sleep.

Even so you do not understand those
pole carriers, who wear their fingers
too tight. And so you cry, out of
the bone with an echo; laugh, the
fingers grow tighter.

Moving.
That you have understood
with your veins which
ask for water.
Water to flush out scorpion swimmers.
Strange names they
shake out of your blood. Now eyes,
torso, legs are draining into bottles
you call water shapes.

They think they have tied off
some devil with silk strings. But each
night, when they come with their white
nets of sleep, you have saved some moment.
Some precise
feature.

A photograph
that is your face.

Light filtering
through points in cold silk.

Coral,
dense as a name breathed.

—susan sonde

steve budman

*an abnormal increase in the amount of cerebrospinal fluid within the cranial cavity, with expansion of the cerebral ventricles, enlargement of the skull, especially the forehead, and atrophy of the brain.
—Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary

Our hearts beat in a rhythm
akin to the yawning of oysters
in our wrinkled bed.
We are puzzled things,
and move with the ground
to the rumblings of some long past
noon or dawn,

frown, scratch our heads,
then move on
as the starfish crawls along
coral, belly first
and last
and glutted.

We are slow,
and careful to digest,

and it has come to this:
nine miles we have crawled on our bellies,
the tenth, too full to cross.
Arms still hung with seaweed
we stand
grateful for the wringings of our brains.

We are tethered.
When we move, the stake drags with us.
And we see it,
see it over our shoulders.
We are watchful things,
watch moon, watch stars,
watch mud ooze surround our back feet,
blink.

We are slow. Slow to rise.
We are just now wiping
the sleep from our eyes,
We frown.

—elizabeth ayres

When the cats no longer
lie
quiet
in the warm hollows between us
but rise up and stalk my dreams
to split them open
with their yowling loudly at the door,
it is morning.

Things fall at me
from the medicine chest;
quick turns of phrase
stick on my tongue.
My mouth will not part
with the new poem,
instinctive and intangible, as
a cat's cry,
but just as loud, just as constant.

Half-asleep, I pry open
the coffee can lid.

How clumsily I left you,
sleeping in the bed.

—marianne laroche

steve
udman

Tell Sam that I ain't gonna play hid game no mo
an tell em that I ain't comin roun no mo
an I ain't gonna dance in hid bah no mo

And tell em that I got me a new man
Some one who strong and gentle and make me feel real good inside
And rub my stomach when I don't feel real good inside.

And tell me I'm pretty when I know all along I ain't
And puts the red ribbon in the hair
And hot coffee to keep out the window cold

Yeah you tell Sam that I ain't gonna dance in hid bah no mo
Cause I gota person of my own.

—cassie johannssen

david sperling

Soliloquoy

Alone? And now must I betray myself?
The iambs I must have to break myself
can ne'er be grouped together in the mind.
Each of the thousand shadows here before
Alone, like timid bawd undid himself;
And when he'd bared himself to all 'twere here
'Twas not unusual to spy a tear
Parade most righteously from matron's eye
Into her laugh where she would swallow it.
But I, this last poor player, do disdain
To peel for you the layers of my soul:
You shall not think you've known my character.
Sleep walkers who bump, bump into yourselves,
I see your eyes, like lanterns blind men wave,
Like growths on cavern-fish that brush the walls
And float alone occasionally dreaming
Of light and other ways to look than in.
This playhouse is no cafeteria
Where you can sit and suck my ginger soul
And wonder if yours is as sweet, as hot,
Like cannibals who lick their lips and dream.
Abandon lust! Here is no penny brothel,
No house of mad and quick-forgotten things.
I will not have you come to understand
That all my speech is monitored *and planned.*

[pause]

Just outside that door are dead roses
Go fashion me a thorny martyr-crown
[Bloody brows seem all in vogue this year]
Is "Consummatum est" never to come?
O, nail my hands and feet to dogwood T,
O, here is light. Look! Look! this floodlit zone,
Here is Golgotha, here is Calvary!

—richard lauchman

Daydream

Three black crows
on the side
of a hill
sitting like three black
crosses.

—paul burch

I'm a hole puncher
me and my hole puncher, we punch a whole bunch
of holes
To stay ahead awhile.

I'm a ruler render
me and my whims, we wham a lot of them
rulers with the wirey metal strip
    that keeps you straight
    and shaves your lead
it rips right off
the wire I mean when you whap it well.
Hell.
Things to do in between dialing when
the phone is busy uh busy uh busy uh

—chris field

Broken wings

A crow pulls trash
from a rusty barrel,
while a boy stalks with his BB gun
under bushes.

Crouching and walking,
legs partially buried in his stomach
rustle ground leaves
like those broken wings
children chase to touch.

The boy's eye balances the bead
of the gun
on the eye
of the crow
squeezing the gun
like a branch to hold on.

Holding inside
for his heart to stop
pumping that blood
into his stomach
and his ears...

He shoots,
ruffling black feathers
like a light wind.
Falling to the ground
the crow hops,
as the boy pumps more life into his gun,
sending BBs to become invisible
in the crow's side.

The crow lies motionless
eyes open
the boy pushes the black in
with the gun butt
that buries the crow's head
in the ground
that stops:
the pump of heart,
the flow
of blood.

—nick thiel

Sergeant Graves

I sat and watched
you after you died
in that Army Hospital.

It was just you and I
Sergeant Graves and
the resuscitation machine
slushing back and forth.
It still expanded and
contracted your dead chest.

I wondered a lot of things
about you Sergeant Graves
as I tagged your right toe.
Mostly I wondered if
you still had those three
Clark Bars in your top
drawer.

They were there Sergeant Graves
they were there, and I was
eating the last one as
I slid you into the dark refrigerator.

—ritch kepler

Nightwind

1

nightwind blows through grass
and through the man lying there
in the grass. propped on elbows,
staring at his dream of trees

2

striking matches in the may grass,
he lies there collecting nightsounds
that fall on him and curls himself up
around the branches like smoke; dreaming
of wind in the treetops.

3

he is a native here, like that birdbath
through the trees, and he rises and dances
in the cool grass, chanting his secret voodoo
to the winds that drift through trees.

4

and in his dreams of wind and trees, he joins in
festivals of cloud motion that hoist anchor on
the stars, and set the sky adrift.

5

and finding the clouds to be green, like the trees,
he distinguishes the curve of himself
from his collection of nightsounds;
from branches that clothed him like monkey tails;
from that birdbath through the trees;
from the slope he danced on;
and breaks the cage of hands round his eyes.

—robert fox

marianne laroche

calvert

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